

extends through the thickness of the panel even though no single panel domain extends the entire thickness of the panel.

Applicant asserts “extending through the thickness of the panel” means extending through the entire thickness of the panel, *i.e.*, spanning from a primary surface to an opposing surface. Such a meaning has support throughout the present Application, including each of the Figures. Respectfully, Applicant believes that a skilled artisan would understand the phrase in a similar fashion, both from a dictionary definition of “through”, from its context in the claim and from the claim’s support in the Application.

Enclosed is a photocopy of page 1230 of Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition, which contains definitions for “through”. Each of these definitions indicates that “through” means extending *entirely* from one surface to another or one boundary to another. Applicant fails to find support for a definition of “through” analogous to the Examiner’s belief that “through” can mean less than all the way through.

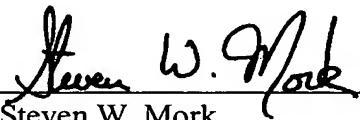
Furthermore, the present Application sets for a definition of “through” in the context of the phrase in question as extending from one primary surface to an opposing primary surface. Applicant points to the sentence that spans lines 33 and 34 on page 5 of the present Application which reads: “Desirably, a band also extends the thickness of the panel.” This is the specific sentence Applicant used for support in amending the present claims to include “extending through the thickness of the panel...” in the response dated 11 June 2003. Applicant asserts that this sentence on lines 33 and 34 of page 5 unquestionable defines “extending through the thickness of the panel...” as meaning extending the thickness of the panel. “Thickness of the panel” is synonymous with “panel thickness”, which means a perpendicular distance between a primary face and its opposing face (*see*, page 4, lines 33-34 of the present invention). Therefore, the meaning of “extending through the thickness of the panel ...” according to the context of the present Application is extending from a primary face perpendicularly to an opposing face.

Neither the dictionary definitions nor the context of the present invention supports the Examiner’s understanding of “through” as meaning extending partly through as opposed to entirely through the panel thickness. Furthermore, neither the

dictionary definitions nor the context of the present invention provides a meaning for the claims of the present invention that encompasses the layered structures of Reeves, et al. As such, Applicant finds the structures of Reeves, et al. outside the claim scope of the present Application. If the structures of Reeves, et al. are outside the claim scope of the present invention then the present rejections are without merit.

In view of these remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the present rejections and allow Claims 1-12 and 15-22 of the present Application. If the Examiner wishes to maintain any or all of the rejections, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner provide for the record (1) a reason to dispute the enclosed dictionary definitions for "through"; and (2) an explanation as to how a skilled artisan could interpret "through" from the context of the Application, particularly that used as support for the presently disputed claim amendment, in a manner that means less than from a primary face to an opposing face.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven W. Mork", is written over a horizontal line.

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